

PUSHKIN AND CHINA

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the actual problem of "Pushkin and China". For the first time it was designated in Russian studies of literature by M. P. Alekseev. This issue was discussed most actively in the 1970s, when two views on the Pushkin approach in the reception of the "Chinese theme" were formed. The first position was defended by D. I. Belkin, who proposed to consider not only China, but also, in general, the East as a "concept" in Pushkin's work. Special attention was paid to the conscious nature of Pushkin's perception of Chinese classical culture, which is why the study was subjected to both works of art by the poet and his political writings, diaries and travel records, also memoir prose. The second view belonged to the specialist in Iranian studies I. S. Braginsky, who continued to develop the ideas of academic N. I. Conrad of universal typology in the Russian material. From his point of view, Pushkin's reception of the East (including China) proceeded in a semi-conscious form, which does not reject the need to turn to conscious borrowing reflected in political essays or diary notes. It discussed that in the analysis of A. S. Pushkin's poetic works the concept of "West-East synthesis" is of great importance. The East is not an inclusion of "Oriental motives", but a fragment of consciousness, a moment of aesthetic vision. The authors of the proposed article synthesize these two approaches and by examples show what positive results can be obtained in this case. We record the facts of A. S. Pushkin's appeal to the Chinese tradition (at the biographical, historical and cultural levels). At the same time, we show how the "Chinese text" is presented in Pushkin's consciousness, if not to close it with "small time", according to M. Bakhtin, and to include in the "big time" which is a wider historical and cultural extent. In other words, we study Pushkin's poems (the poetic heritage of the late, mature years, mainly 1830s) in the context of the Chinese worldview, acting as a "matrix of analysis" due to the fact that A. S. Pushkin acts as a bright and extraordinary innovation in Ancient China has long been systematically developed into a whole structure, whether it is a motive, genre or a system of views.

Key words: Russian literature, A. S. Pushkin, East, China, text, interpretation.

1 Introduction

The topic "Pushkin and China" has already been the subject of deep scientific researches. In the 1930s it was clearly marked by M. P. Alekseev (Alekseev, 1999). The author explained the reasons for Pushkin's enthusiasm of China based on his huge material. According to M. P. Alekseev, China was part of the orbit of European politics, being identified with the delights of aesthetic taste in the highest manifestations. In both Western literature and Western art of the XVII–XVIII centuries "Chinese" (or "Sinism" in the Russian vernacular way) held a special position. The elite of Russian society took up the baton of "Chinese fun" (in architectural ensembles, garden and park complex, residential interiors), literature expressed "Chinese" in the subjects, tunes and images. A. S. Pushkin was familiar with N. Bichurin (called father Iakinf), a monk and sinologist, the head of The Russian Spiritual mission in Beijing and the author of ethnographic works about China and translations from Chinese. The poet enthusiastically read about China, something was published in the "Literary newspaper" edited by him.

The continuation of the development of "Chinese theme" in Pushkin's work was the article written by D. I. Belkin (Belkin, 1958). He contested for the position of M. P. Alekseev that "the interest of the poet to China was caused by the French literature". D. I. Belkin pointed out that the poet's attention to the exotic country was caused by biographical reasons. Pushkin was fascinated by the genealogy of the noble family to which he belonged, and from various sources, including family legends, he knew that the famous "Arap of Peter the Great", who was his great-grandfather Hannibal, was sent to Siberia in the status of major of the Tobolsk garrison, to the Russian-Chinese border, to measure The Great Chinese Wall. Over the course of his life Pushkin collected materials that expanded his knowledge about China, its history and philosophy. D. I. Belkin explained in detail how the preparation for the trip to China and Tibet took place and why it wasn't put through. The interest of A. S. Pushkin to China "was of truly scientific by nature... Poet saw a huge country with great future in China."

One cannot agree with these facts. They reflect the form of A. S. Pushkin's conscious reception to Chinese cultural world. However, there is a question about the ways of unconscious

perception of their traditions, implemented in the figurative-motive system of Pushkin's lyrics.

This was written by I. S. Braginsky in course of Pushkin's relation to the East as a whole (Braginsky, I. S., 1974). Trying to catch and understand the meaning of the poem "Grapes" (1826), he came to the conclusion that there is a semantic depth. It is not reduced to autobiographical "Crimean layer" of memories of the poet (but this view prevailed). This was "the work that bears the imprint of West-East literary synthesis," according to I. S. Braginsky. He was attracted by classical Oriental poetry as the means of explanation of A.S. Pushkin's creative vision, and there one can see the main merit of Oriental scientist who dealt with the problems of Russian classical literature.

Pushkin's poem "Grapes", from his point of view, "is a fairly typical kyt'a". Kyt'a is one of the forms of Arab-Muslim lyrics. I. S. Braginsky shows how the poet managed to achieve his "inaccessible simplicity" by mastered superimposed principles of Oriental writing in his own text. A. S. Pushkin, in accordance with this logic, worked in the genre of "javab" - a kind of "response" to the works of predecessors, and this was done "not by imitation, but intuitively". I. S. Braginsky did not reject the Western edge of Pushkin's masterpiece. It is a question of the need to Supplement the "Western" interpretation of the "Eastern" interpretation for the sake of cultural balance. I. S. Braginsky insisted on the fact that the isolation of the Eastern and Western elements is a heuristic procedure. The essence of "West-East synthesis" is not limited to the search for the entanglement of Eastern motives "in "Western" works, as it was done by those who reduced the reception to the procedures of conscious operation of figurative units. In the lyrics of "West-East synthesis it is impossible to separate the East from the West".

We will try to show the forms of "Chinese text" on specific examples from Pushkin's poetry.

2 Methodology

The main method of research presents a complex approach combining several methods. Two of them are of the greatest value. They are 1) structural-semantic and 2) literary-hermeneutic methods.

The essence of the first method is to take into account the whole palette of intra-architectural relations. The text within its boundaries is thought of as a system of signs, a model of reality. As for the second method, it is based on the art of interpretation of meanings. The main position of hermeneutics is the process of understanding the "alien". Understanding is not limited to the rational sphere and logical operations. It allows the participation of the intuitive sides of consciousness. There are lots of meanings, explicit and hidden, in any kind of texts. The meaning of the statement is not only the meaning embedded in it by the author, but also what the interpreter was able to extract from it. Hence, there comes a large role of the dialogical factor. The dialogue we need to understand is the openness of the creative consciousness, which "encourages people to savor every word" (Villalobos Antúnez & Bello, 2014; Karpanina et al, 2018).

We also point out that the article takes into account the fundamental results of modern comparative studies, for them see the article (Afanasev & Sayapova, 2016; Ozerova & Bekmetov, 2016; Ibragimov et al, 2015; Smirnova et al, 2016; Gazizov et al, 2017).

3 Results

One of the motives of the late Pushkin's lyrics was the motive of natural existence, connected with the theme of death and cemetery. We can find it in his poem "When out of town, pensive I wander..." (1836). It begins, in Taoist spirit, with the description of aimless wandering of the hero behind a city line which suddenly, without "intention", brings him to a public cemetery. The poet uses the technique of contrast: a public

cemetery for him symbolizes the continuation of the city, its crowd and overcrowding. This cemetery is opposed to the village, causing serenity and tranquility of its simplicity. The poet depicts a situation typical of ancient and medieval Chinese lyrics: the hero visits rural graves in the autumn, in the evening and in silence, when the sounds of the wind are heard; these are not just archetypes of the decline of physical and spiritual forces, as can be assumed, based on the analysis of the "cemetery theme" in the works of European sentimentalists and pre-romantics; these are the attributes of the world, providing the depth of understanding of the essence of the Universe in its cycled movement. To hear the "secret voices" of the Universe, the Chinese poet nurtured loneliness – in the mountains, but more often in the forest, during the twilight, in everyday sadness, breaking the privacy for a fun, but, in general, friendly communication "heart to heart" restrained. In addition, the rural cemetery is a family cemetery, and in this status it corresponds to the piety found in Chinese lyrics in relation to ancestors.

In the poem "Again I visited..." (1835) there's a really touching episode when a hero is on his way returning to his places of origin ("ancestral possession") "in the light of the moon" passes three pines; they welcome him with peaceful "familiar noise" on the road "covered with rain", which rises in the mountain. These are the features of a typical Chinese lyrical picture: night, silver moon, pine trees, a river with the "sloping banks," even a lonely ride on horseback.

The natural look of life is emphasized by A. S. Pushkin in his earlier poem "Winter. What should we do in the village?" (1829). Until now, it was analyzed as a kind of diary entry of one day in the life of a nobleman; the poet perfectly imitates prosaic intonation in the text through the reproduction of ordinary things and events (a cup of morning tea, brought by a servant, "the old neighbor's magazines", the hunting scene, the evening game of draughts – one of the entertainment in "the countryside", a meeting with the provincial "girls", animating the sleepy world of the estate, psychologically accurate depiction of the establishing relations between them and the hero, first timid, and then so uninhibited that the acquaintance ends with an unexpected kiss on the twilight porch). Pushkin does not keep to a predetermined plan, he wanders from subject to subject, capturing the mood of blissful nostalgia, it's healthy "doing nothing". Although the condition is referred to as "the poison of boredom", nonetheless, it wasn't annoying; hero lives in so-called tempo of the Space, slightly speeding it up when it wakes up the likeness of the passion, which is non-binding, existing here and now, in the mode of simultaneity. The purpose of life is to fill this moment, for it does not appear by the will of the hero, but is given from above as a gift of heaven, a reward for the ability to escape from the use of hard work where it is unnecessary. In this new reality, everything is incomplete, fragmentary, vague: reading the book is tiring because of the mismatch of letters and thoughts coming to the state, creative work-writing poems-comes to naught because of the lack of tension and attention, the circle of mundane conversations about the upcoming elections, the weather and the "king of hearts". The world is enveloped in a fog of laziness, kind indifference, passivity, forcing the hero to obey the order, which is not usual for his unbridled nature. The world must be taken as a whole, in the form in which it is given, and wait for the bright colors to bloom – that's the philosophy of Pushkin's carelessness, hidden in the Russian district destiny. Nothing original about it. On the one hand, it asserts the fullness of the traditional topos with its slow life structure, reflected in the works of European classicists and sentimentalists, on the other – it's in the "big time" Taoist painting depicting the "fresh" existence of man as a normal, unburdened and "correct" process plays solo to Pushkin's philosopher. It is necessary to enjoy any everyday little things, as does Bai Juyi (772-846), a Chinese poet. He enjoys his warm, custom-made home robe, which protects him from the winter cold ("I made myself a warm robe").

a bathrobe has been sewed for me –

here is already warmth!

- he sincerely shares his enthusiasm and further notes in a conversational style:

In morning I'll wear –

and so I sit until dark.

At night I'll be covered –

will sleep well until morning.

The only thing that does not give him rest is the idea that the robe belongs only to him, and the poor neighbor lacks it, and he has to warm the pathetic, transitory body with imperfect "tools", like a musty stove or an old hearth.

Traces of the ancient Chinese concept of "Xiao Yao Yu" (way of life in "carefree wandering") are found in other Pushkin texts of the same year, 1829.

So, in the poem "Whether I wander along of noisy streets..." the poet reproduces the situation of non-directional movement in the urban space and internal seclusion among the noisy crowd. Starting from the first verse it is given in the form of a personal verb: "I wander (along the streets)", "I enter (into the temple during the divine service)", "I surrender (to reflections)" e.t.c. Thoughts of the hero are about the nature of elevation above the ordinary, their theme is connection between generations, a change of life, an objective cycle of birth and death. They have spiritually and stylistically sound Eastern idea of a calm, ennobled acceptance of fate; death does not frighten the hero, because it is inherent natural regularity. One detail of the text can't but attract: Pushkin's hero is ascetic, but this quality isn't embodied through his avoiding of people and the salvation of the soul by going into monkish seclusion, but it lies in the quiet self-assertion among them, as if among the dangerous, raging sea there is a sandy island. Taoist and Confucian hermits of old China knew this co-existence well and, in every way introducing, left the archetypes of such experiences in lyrical works.

The culture of China has identified two types of seclusion - "small" and "large". The first view was close to Christian escape from world temptations; man left the home abode, populating wild forests and mountains; he must avoid what distorts the truth, distorts the straight path, what breaks the main purpose of man – to stay spiritually clean in front of the Heaven. The second assumed a symbolic "departure from the world": as Pushkin's hero, the recluse lived among people in his usual way (eating, drinking wine, having fun, making friends), but internally maintained a deep and persistent concentration, so that he found the strength to escape from self-interest, careerism and cruelty. Most often, it was a civil servant; he could easily build a "spiritual temple" among the social noise, and his very fearlessness is not an example of selfish self-rescue but an altruistic assistance to those who could observe his behavior and make the right conclusions. All thoughts of the "large" hermit come up to the understanding of the brevity of human existence and the uselessness of idle speculation. The ideal of "large" asceticism, again, is greatly presented in the ancient and medieval Chinese lyrics.

4 Discussion

It may seem that the proposed interpretation of Pushkin's image is a game, a kind of experiment. We are sure, however, that the General methodological calculations will be able to convince in the opposite: 1) eternally actual classical literature needs live contextual reading and 2) any kind of an interpreting idea is realized in the mode of quiet complementarity. Classic needs controversy, in fact, an endless conversation about it.

5 Conclusions

Thus, in this article we tried to consider the images of Pushkin poetry in the Eastern (Chinese) context. The East of a concrete case is not only the object of knowledge, but also conceptual

tools, a meta-language by means of which it is possible to describe technique of formation of art reality. The science of Pushkin's work is enriched with new meanings, and Orientalism (Sinology) expands the boundaries of its application.

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